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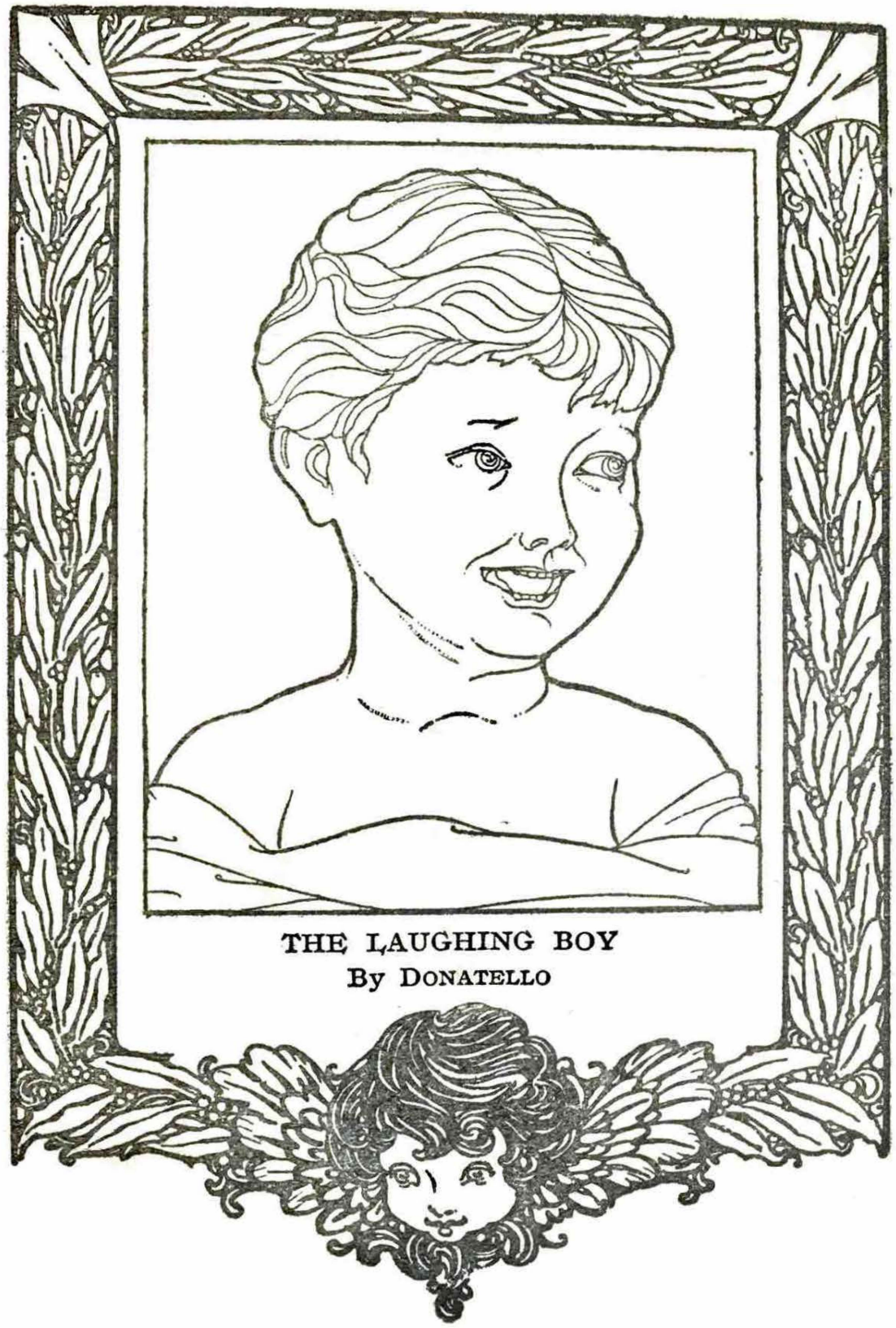

THE LAUGHING BOY
By DONATELLO

A CHOICE OF THE BEST POEMS FOR THE YOUNG

COMPILED BY
ROGER INGPEN

SELWYN & BLOUNT LTD
LONDON

TO

ROSALIND

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Thanks are due to Mr. Walter de la Mare for permission to include four of his poems.

A CHOICE OF THE BEST POEMS FOR THE YOUNG

The Piper

PIPING down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me :

" Pipe a song about a lamb."
So I piped with merry cheer.
" Piper, pipe that song again " ;
So I piped ; he wept to hear.

" Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe,
Sing thy songs of happy cheer " ;
So I sang the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

" Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book that all may read——"
So he vanished from my sight ;
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs,
Every child may joy to hear.

William Blake.

Early Rising

GET up, little sister: the morning is bright,
And the birds are all singing to welcome the light;
The buds are all opening: the dew's on the flower:
If you shake but a branch, see there falls quite a shower.

By the side of their mothers, look under the trees,
How the young lambs are skipping about as they please;
And by all those rings on the water, I know,
The fishes are merrily swimming below.

The bee, I dare say, has been long on the wing
To get honey from every flower of the Spring;
For the bee never idles, but labours all day,
And thinks, wise little insect, work better than play.

The lark's singing gaily; it loves the bright sun,
And rejoices that now the gay Spring is begun;
For Spring is so cheerful, I think 'twould be wrong
If we did not feel happy to hear the lark's song.

Get up; for when all things are merry and glad,
Good children should never be lazy and sad;
For God gives us daylight, dear sister, that we
May rejoice like the lark, and may work like the bee.

Lady Flora Hastings.

The Cottager to Her Infant

THE days are cold, the nights are long,
The north-wind sings a doleful song;
Then hush again upon my breast;
All merry things are now at rest,
Save thee, my pretty Love!

The Cottager to Her Infant

The kitten sleeps upon the hearth ;
The crickets long have ceased their mirth ;
There's nothing stirring in the house
Save one *wee*, hungry, nibbling mouse :
Then why so busy Thou ?

Nay ! start not at that sparkling light ;
'Tis but the moon that shines so bright
On the window-pane bedropped with rain :
Then, little Darling, sleep again,
And wake when it is day !

Dorothy Wordsworth.

The Old Clock on the Stairs

SOMEWHAT back from the village street
Stands the old-fashioned country seat.
Across its antique portico
Tall poplar-trees their shadows throw ;
And from its station in the hall
An ancient time-piece says to all—
" For ever—never !
Never—for ever ! "

By day its voice is low and light ;
But in the silent dead of night,
Distinct as a passing footstep's fall
It echoes along the vacant hall,
Along the ceiling, along the floor,
And seems to say, at each chamber door—
" For ever—never !
Never—for ever ! "

The Old Clock on the Stairs

Through days of sorrow and of mirth,
Through days of death and days of birth,
Through every swift vicissitude
Of changeful time, unchanged it has stood,
And as if, like God, it all things saw,
It calmly repeats those words of awe—
"For ever—never!
Never—for ever!"

In that mansion used to be
Free-hearted Hospitality;
His great fires up the chimney roared;
The stranger feasted at his board;
But, like the skeleton at the feast,
That warning time-piece never ceased—
"For ever—never!
Never—for ever!"

There groups of merry children played,
There youths and maidens dreaming strayed;
O precious hours! O golden prime,
And affluence of love and time!
Even as a miser counts his gold,
Those hours the ancient time-piece told—
"For ever—never!
Never—for ever!"

From that chamber, clothed in white,
The bride came forth on her wedding night;
There, in that silent room below,
The dead lay in his shroud of snow;
And in the hush that followed the prayer,
Was heard the old clock on the stair—
"For ever—never!
Never—for ever!"

The Old Clock on the Stairs

All are scattered now and fled,
Some are married, some are dead ;
And when I ask, with throbs of pain,
" Ah ! when shall they all meet again ? "
As in the days long since gone by
The ancient time-piece makes reply—
" For ever—never !
Never—for ever ! "

Never here—for ever there,
Where all parting, pain, and care,
And death, and time shall disappear,—
For ever there, but never here !
The horologe of Eternity
Sayeth this incessantly—
" For ever—never !
Never—for ever ! "

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Nurse's Song

WHEN the voices of children are heard on the green,
And laughing is heard on the hill,
My heart is at rest within my breast,
And everything else is still.

Then come home, my children ! the sun is gone down,
And the dews of night arise ;
Come, come ! leave off play, and let us away
Till the morning appears in the skies.

" No, no ! let us play, for it is yet day,
And we cannot go to sleep ;
Besides, in the sky the little birds fly,
And the hills are all covered with sheep."

Nurse's Song

Well, well ! go and play till the light fades away,
And then go home to bed.—
The little ones leapèd, and shouted, and laughed ;
And all the hills echoèd.

William Blake.

A Ternary of Littles

A LITTLE saint best fits a little shrine,
A little prop best fits a little vine ;
As my small cruse best fits my little wine.

A little seed best fits a little soil,
A little trade best fits a little toil ;
As my small jar best fits my little oil.

A little bin best fits a little bread,
A little garland best fits a little head ;
As my small stuff best fits my little shed.

A little hearth best fits my little fire,
A little chapel fits a little choir ;
As my small bell best fits my little spire.

A little stream best fits a little boat,
A little lead best fits a little float ;
As my small pipe best fits my little note.

Robert Herrick.

The Village Blacksmith

UNDER a spreading chestnut tree
The village smithy stands ;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands,
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,
His face is like the tan ;
His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,
You can hear his bellows blow ;
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,
With measured beat and slow,
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door ;
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing-floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church
And sits among his boys ;
He hears the parson pray and preach,
He hears his daughter's voice
Singing in the village choir,
And it makes his heart rejoice.

It sounds to him like her mother's voice
Singing in Paradise !

The Village Blacksmith

He needs must think of her once more,
How in the grave she lies ;
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling,—rejoicing,—sorrowing,
Onward through life he goes ;
Each morning sees some task begun,
Each evening sees it close ;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,
For the lesson thou hast taught !
Thus at the flaming forge of life
Our fortunes must be wrought ;
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped
Each burning deed and thought !

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Lucy Gray : or, Solitude

OFT I had heard of Lucy Gray :
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade, Lucy knew ;
She dwelt on a wide moor —
The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door !

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green ;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

Lucy Gray : or, Solitude

"To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go ;
And take a lantern, child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, father ! will I gladly do :
'Tis scarcely afternoon—
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon !"

At this the father raised his hook
And snapped a faggot-band ;
He plied his work ; and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe :
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time ;
She wandered up and down ;
And many a hill did Lucy climb,
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide ;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor ;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood
A furlong from their door.

They wept—and, turning homeward, cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet !"
When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Lucy Gray : or, Solitude

Then downwards from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small ;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone wall ;

And then an open field they crossed :
The marks were still the same ;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost ;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank,
And farther there were none !

Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child ;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind ;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

William Wordsworth.

Grace for a Child

HERE, a little child, I stand,
Heaving up my either hand ;
Cold as Paddocks though they be,
Yet I lift them up to Thee,
For a Benison to fall
On our meat, and on us all ! Amen.

Robert Herrick.

Bunches of Grapes

"BUNCHES of grapes," says Timothy;
"Pomegranates pink," says Elaine;
"A junket of cream and a cranberry tart
For me," says Jane.

"Love-in-a-mist," says Timothy;
"Primroses pale," says Elaine;
"A nosegay of pinks and mignonette
For me," says Jane.

"Chariots of gold," says Timothy;
"Silvery wings," says Elaine;
"A bumpity ride in a waggon of hay
For me," says Jane.

Walter de la Mare.

For a' That, and a' That

IS there, for honest poverty
That hangs his head, and a' that?
The coward-slave, we pass him by—
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Our toils obscure, and a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp—
The man's the gowd for a' that.

What though on hamely fare we dine—
Wear hodden grey, and a' that?
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine—
A man's a man for a' that:
For a' that, and a' that,
Their tinsel show, and a' that;
The honest man, though e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

For a' That, and a' That

Ye see yon birkie ca'd a lord,
  Wha struts, and stares, and a' that ;
Though hundreds worship at his word,
  He's but a coof for a' that :
For a' that, and a' that,
  His ribband, star, and a' that ;
The man of independent mind,
  He looks and laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak' a belted knight,
  A marquis, duke, and a' that ;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
  Gude faith he mauna fa' that !
For a' that, and a' that,
  Their dignities and a' that ;
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
  Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
  As come it will for a' that,
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
  May bear the gree and a' that :
For a' that, and a' that,
  It's comin' yet for a' that,
That man to man, the warld o'er,
  Shall brothers be for a' that !

Robert Burns.

We Are Seven

A SIMPLE child
  That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
  What should it know of death ?

We Are Seven

I met a little cottage girl;
  She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
  That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
  And she was wildly clad;
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
  Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little maid,
  How many may you be?"
"How many? Seven in all," she said,
  And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell."
  She answered, "Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
  And two are gone to sea.

"Two of us in the churchyard lie,
  My sister and my brother;
And, in the churchyard cottage, I
  Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
  And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven!—I pray you tell,
  Sweet maid, how this may be."

Then did the little maid reply,
  "Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the churchyard lie
  Beneath the churchyard tree."

"You run about, my little maid,
  Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the churchyard laid,
  Then ye are only five."

We Are Seven

" Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little maid replied,
" Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.

" My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchiefs there I hem ;
And there upon the ground I sit—
I sit and sing to them.

" And often after sunset, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

" The first that died was sister Jane ;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain,
And then she went away.

" So, in the churchyard she was laid ;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

" And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

" How many are you, then," said I,
" If they two are in Heaven ? "
Quick was the little maid's reply,
" O Master ! we are seven."

We Are Seven

" But they are dead : those two are dead !
Their spirits are in Heaven ! "
'Twas throwing words away ; for still
The little maid would have her will,
And said, " Nay, we are seven ! "

William Wordsworth.

The Reverie of Poor Susan

AT the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears
Hangs a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung for three years :
Poor Susan has pass'd by the spot, and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the bird.

'Tis a note of enchantment ; what ails her ? She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees ;
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dal
Down which she so often has tripp'd with her pail ;
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven : but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade ;
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all pass'd away from her eyes !

William Wordsworth.

The Pilgrim

WHO would true valour see,
Let him come hither!
One here will constant be,
Come wind, come weather;
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His flint-avow'd intent
To be a Pilgrim.

Whoso beset him round
With dismal stories,
Do but themselves confound;
His strength the more is.
No lion can him fright;
He'll with a giant fight;
But he will have a right
To be a Pilgrim.

Nor enemy, nor friend,
Can daunt his spirit;
He knows he at the end
Shall Life inherit:—
Then, fancies, fly away;
He'll not fear what men say;
He'll labour night and day,
To be a Pilgrim.

John Bunyan.

A Farewell

MY fairest child, I have no song to give you;
No lark could pipe to skies so dull and gray:
Yet, ere we part, one lesson I can leave you
For every day.

A Farewell

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever ;
Do noble things, not dream them, all day long :
And so make life, death, and that vast for-ever
One grand, sweet song.

Charles Kingsley.

A Boy's Song

WHERE the pools are bright and deep,
Where the grey trout lies asleep,
Up the river and over the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the blackbird sings the latest,
Where the hawthorn blooms the sweetest,
Where the nestlings chirp and flee,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the mowers mow the cleanest,
Where the hay lies thick and greenest,
There to track the homeward bee,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Where the hazel bank is steepest,
Where the shadow falls the deepest,
Where the clustering nuts fall free,
That's the way for Billy and me.

Why the boys should drive away
Little sweet maidens from the play,
Or love to banter and fight so well,
That's the thing I never could tell.

A Boy's Song

But this I know, I love to play
Through the meadow, among the hay ;
Up the water and over the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me.

James Hogg.

The Shepherd Boy

HE that is down need fear no fall,
He that is low no pride ;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

I am content with what I have,
Little be it or much :
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,
Because Thou savest such.

Fullness to such a burden is
That go on pilgrimage :
Here little, and hereafter bliss,
Is best from age to age.

John Bunyan.

The Land of Dreams

AWAKE, awake, my little boy !
Thou wast thy mother's only joy.
Why dost thou weep in thy gentle sleep ?
Awake ! thy father does thee keep.

The Land of Dreams

"O, what land is the Land of Dreams?
What are its mountains, and what are its streams?
O father! I saw my mother there,
Among the lilies by waters fair.

"Among the lambs, clothèd in white,
She walked with her Thomas in sweet delight.
I wept for joy, like a dove I mourn;
O! when shall I again return?"

"Dear child, I also by pleasant streams
Have wandered all night in the Land of Dreams;
But though calm and warm the waters wide,
I could not get to the other side."

"Father, O father! what do we here,
In this land of unbelief and fear?
The Land of Dreams is better far,
Above the light of the morning star."

William Blake.

Fairy Song

OVER hill, over dale,
Through bush, through briar,
Over park, over pale,
Through flood, through fire,
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the Fairy Queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
In their gold coats spots you see—

Fairy Song

These be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours.
I must go seek some dew-drops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

William Shakespeare.

Tartary

IF I were Lord of Tartary,
Myself and me alone,
My bed should be of ivory,
Of beaten gold my throne ;
And in my court should peacocks flaunt
And in my forests tigers haunt,
And in my pools great fishes slant
Their fins athwart the sun.

If I were Lord of Tartary,
Trumpeters every day
To every meal should summon me,
And in the courtyard bray ;
And in the evening lamps would shine,
Yellow as honey, red as wine,
While harp, and flute, and mandoline,
Made music sweet and gay.

If I were Lord of Tartary,
I'd wear a robe of beads,
White, and gold, and green they'd be—
And clustered thick as seeds ;
And ere should wane the morning-star,
I'd don my robe and scimitar,
And zebras seven should draw my car
Through Tartary's dark glades.

Tartary

Lord of the fruits of Tartary,
  Her rivers silver-pale !
Lord of the hills of Tartary,
  Glen, thicket, wood, and dale !
Her flashing stars, her scented breeze,
Her trembling lakes, like foamless seas,
Her bird-delighting citron-trees
  In every purple vale.

Walter de la Mare.

The Fairies

UP the airy mountain,
  Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting,
  For fear of little men ;
Wee folk, good folk,
  Trooping all together ;
Green jacket, red cap,
  And white owl's feather !

Down along the rocky shore
  Some make their home,
They live on crispy pancakes
  Of yellow tide-foam ;
Some in the reeds
  Of the black mountain-lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
  All night awake.

High on the hill-top
  The old King sits ;
He is now so old and gray,
  He's nigh lost his wits.

The Fairies

With a bridge of white mist
  Columbkill he crosses,
On his stately journeys
  From Slieveleague to Rosses ;
Or going up with music
  On cold starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
  Of the gay Northern Lights.

They stole little Bridget
  For seven years long ;
When she came down again,
  Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
  Between the night and morrow,
They thought that she was fast asleep,
  But she was dead with sorrow.
They have kept her ever since
  Deep within the lake,
On a bed of flag-leaves,
  Watching till she wake.

By the craggy hill-side,
  Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
  For pleasure here and there.
Is any man so daring
  As dig them up in spite,
He shall find their sharpest thorns
  In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
  Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting,
  For fear of little men ;

The Fairies

Wee folk, good folk,
  Trooping all together ;
Green jacket, red cap,
  And white owl's feather !

William Allingham.

Queen Mab

A LITTLE fairy comes at night,
  Her eyes are blue, her hair is brown,
With silver spots upon her wings,
  And from the moon she flutters down.

She has a little silver wand,
  And when a good child goes to bed
She waves her hand from right to left,
  And makes a circle round its head.

And then it dreams of pleasant things,
  Of fountains filled with fairy fish,
And trees that bear delicious fruit,
  And bow their branches at a wish ;

Of arbours filled with dainty scents
  From lovely flowers that never fade ;
Bright flies that glitter in the sun,
  And glow-worms shining in the shade ;

And talking birds with gifted tongues,
  For singing songs and telling tales,
And pretty dwarfs to show the way
  Through fairy hills and fairy dales.

Queen Mab

But when a bad child goes to bed,
  From left to right she weaves her rings,
And then it dreams all through the night
  Of only ugly horrid things !

Then lions come with glaring eyes,
  And tigers growl, a dreadful noise,
And ogres draw their cruel knives,
  To shed the blood of girls and boys.

Then stormy waves rush on to drown,
  Or raging flames come scorching round,
Fierce dragons hover in the air,
  And serpents crawl along the ground.

Then wicked children wake and weep,
  And wish the long black gloom away ;
But good ones love the dark, and find
  The night as pleasant as the day.

Thomas Hood.

He Prayeth Best

HE prayeth best who loveth best
  All things both great and small ;
For the dear God who loveth us,
  He made and loveth all.

S. T. Coleridge.

Answer to a Child's Question

DO you ask what the birds say? The sparrow, the dove,
The linnet, and thrush say "I love, and I love!"
In the winter they're silent, the wind is so strong;
What it says I don't know, but it sings a loud song.

But green leaves, and blossoms, and sunny warm weather,
And singing and loving—all come back together.
But the lark is so brimful of gladness and love,
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,
That he sings, and he sings, and for ever sings he,
"I love my Love, and my Love loves me."

S. T. Coleridge.

My Dove

I HAD a dove, and the sweet dove died;
And I have thought it died of grieving:
O, what could it grieve for? Its feet were tied
With a silken thread of my own hands' weaving.
Sweet little red feet! why should you die?
Why would you leave me, sweet bird! why?
You lived alone in the forest tree:
Why, pretty thing! would you not live with me?
I kiss'd you oft and gave you white peas;
Why not live sweetly, as in the green trees?

John Keats.

O For a Moon to Light Me Home

O FOR a moon to light me home!
O for a lanthorn green!
For those sweet stars the Pleiades,
That glitter in the twilight trees;
O for a love-lorn taper! O
For a lanthorn green!

O For a Moon to Light Me Home

O for a frock of tartan !
  O for clear, wild grey eyes !
For fingers light as violets,
'Neath branches that the blackbird frets ;
  O for a thirsty meadow ! O
  For clear, wild grey eyes.

O for a heart like almond boughs !
  O for sweet thoughts like rain !
O for first-love like fields of grey,
Shut April-buds at break of day !
  O for sleep like music ! O
  For still dreams like rain !

Walter de la Mare.

The Owl

I

WHEN cats run home and light is come,
  And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
  And the whirring sail goes round,
  And the whirring sail goes round ;
    Alone and warming his five wits,
    The white owl in the belfry sits.

II

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
  And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch
  Twice or thrice his roundelay,
  Twice or thrice his roundelay ;
    Alone and warming his five wits,
    The white owl in the belfry sits.

Lord Tennyson.

The Lamb

LITTLE lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life and bade thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
He is callèd by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb;
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child and thou a lamb,
We are callèd by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee!
Little lamb, God bless thee!

William Blake.

To the Cuckoo

O BLITHE new-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice:
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off and near.

To the Cuckoo

Though babbling only to the vale
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring !
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery ;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listen'd to ; that cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green ;
And thou wert still a hope, a love ;
Still long'd for, never seen !

And I can listen to thee yet ;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessèd bird ! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, fairy place
That is fit home for thee !

William Wordsworth.

A Poet to His Cat

NELLY, methinks, 'twixt thee and me
There is a kind of sympathy ;
And could we interchange our nature—
If I were cat, thou human creature—
I should, like thee, be no great mouser,
And thou, like me, no great composer ;
For like thy plaintive mews, my muse
With villainous whine doth fate abuse,
Because it hath not made me sleek
As golden down on Cupid's cheek ;
And yet thou canst upon the rug lie,
Stretched out like snail, or curled up snugly,
As if thou wert not lean or ugly ;
And I, who in poetic flights
Sometimes complain of sleepless nights,
Regardless of the sun in heaven,
Am apt to doze till past eleven.
The world would just the same go round
If I were hanged and thou wert drowned ;
There is one difference, 'tis true—
Thou dost not know it, and I do.

Hartley Coleridge.

Abou Ben Adhem

ABOU BEN ADHEM (may his tribe increase !)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich and like a lily in bloom,
An Angel writing in a book of gold.
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold ;
And to the Presence in the room he said—

Abou Ben Adhem

"What writest thou?" The Vision raised its head;
And, with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answer'd—"The names of those who love the Lord."
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay! not so!"
Replied the Angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still, and said—"I pray thee then,
Write me as One that loves his fellow men!"

The Angel wrote, and vanish'd. The next night
It came again, with a great wakening light,
And show'd their names whom love of God had bless'd:
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

Leigh Hunt.

The Boy and the Angel

MORNING, evening, noon, and night,
"Praise God!" sang Theocrite.

Then to his poor trade he turned,
Whereby the daily meal was earned.

Hard he laboured, long and well;
O'er his work the boy's curls fell.

But ever, at each period,
He stopped, and sang, "Praise God!"

Then back again his curls he threw,
And cheerful turned to work anew.

The Boy and the Angel

Said Blaise, the listening monk, " Well done ;
I doubt not thou art heard, my son ;

" As well as if thy voice to-day
Were praising God, the Pope's great way.

" This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome
Praises God from Peter's dome."

Said Theocrite, " Would God that I
Might praise Him, that great way, and die ! "

Night passed, day shone,
And Theocrite was gone.

With God a day endures alway,
A thousand years are but a day.

God said in heaven, " Nor day nor night
Now brings the voice of my delight."

Then Gabriel, like a rainbow's birth,
Spread his wings and sank to earth ;

Entered in flesh the empty cell,
Lived there, and played the craftsman well ;

And morning, evening, noon, and night,
Praised God in place of Theocrite.

And from a boy, to youth he grew :
The man put off the stripling's hue :

The man matured and fell away
Into the season of decay ;

And ever over the trade he bent,
And ever lived on earth content.

(He did God's will ; to him, all one
If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said, " A praise is in mine ear ;
There is no doubt in it, no fear ;

" So sing old worlds, and so
New worlds that from my footstool go.

" Clearer loves sound other ways :
I miss my little human praise."

Then sprang forth Gabriel's wings, off fell
The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'Twas Easter Day ; he flew to Rome,
And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

In the tiring room close by
The great outer gallery,

With his holy vestments dight,
Stood the new Pope, Theocrite :

And all his past career
Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade,
Till in his life the sickness weighed,

The Boy and the Angel

And in his cell, when death drew near,
An angel in a dream brought cheer,

And, rising from the sickness drear,
He grew a priest, and now stood here.

To the east with praise he turned,
And in his sight the angel burned.

" I bore thee from thy craftsman's cell,
And set thee here ; I did not well.

" Vainly I left my angel-sphere,
Vain was thy dream of many a year.

" Thy voice's praise seemed weak ; it dropped
—Creation's chorus stopped !

" Go back and praise again
The early way, while I remain.

" With that weak voice of our disdain
Take up creation's pausing strain.

" Back to the cell and poor employ :
Resume the craftsman and the boy ! "

Theocrite grew old at home ;
A new Pope dwelt in Peter's dome.

One vanished as the other died :
They sought God side by side.

Robert Browning.

The Lost Doll

I ONCE had a sweet little doll, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world ;
Her cheeks were so red and so white, dears,
And her hair was so charmingly curled.
But I lost my poor little doll, dears,
As I played in the heath one day ;
And I cried for her more than a week, dears ;
But I never could find where she lay.

I found my poor little doll, dears,
As I played in the heath one day :
Folks say she is horribly changed, dears,
For her paint is all washed away,
And her arm trodden off by the cows, dears,
And her hair not the least bit curled :
Yet for old sakes' sake she is still, dears,
The prettiest doll in the world.

Charles Kingsley.

A True Story

LITTLE Ann and her mother were walking one day
Through London's wide city so fair,
And business obliged them to go by the way
That led them through Cavendish Square.

And as they passed by the great house of a Lord,
A beautiful chariot there came,
To take some most elegant ladies abroad,
Who straightway got into the same.

The ladies in feathers and jewels were seen,
The chariot was painted all o'er ;
The footmen behind were in silver and green,
The horses were prancing before.

A True Story

Little Ann by her mother walk'd silent and sad,
A tear trickled down from her eye ;
Till her mother said, " Ann, I should be very glad
To know what it is makes you cry."

" Mamma," said the child, " see that carriage so fair,
All covered with varnish and gold,
Those ladies are riding so charmingly there,
While we have to walk in the cold :

" You say God is kind to the folks that are good,
But surely it cannot be true ;
Or else I am certain, almost, that He would
Give such a fine carriage to you."

" Look there, little girl," said her mother, " and see
What stands at that very coach door ;
A poor ragged beggar, and listen how she
A halfpenny stands to implore.

" All pale is her face, and deep sunk is her eye,
Her hands look like skeleton's bones ;
She has got a few rags just about her to tie ;
And her naked feet bleed on the stones.

" ' Dear ladies,' she cries, and the tears trickle down,
' Relieve a poor beggar, I pray ;
I've wandered all hungry about this wide town
And not eaten a morsel to-day.

" ' My father and mother are long ago dead,
My brother sails over the sea ;
And I've not a rag, or a morsel of bread,
As plainly, I'm sure, you may see.

" ' A fever I caught, which was terribly bad,
But no nurse or physic had I ;
An old dirty shed was the house that I had,
And only on straw could I lie.

A True Story

" ' And now that I'm better, yet feeble, and faint
And famish'd, and naked, and cold,
I wander about with my grievous complaint,
And seldom get aught but a scold.

" ' Some will not attend to my pitiful call,
Some think me a vagabond cheat ;
And scarcely a creature relieves me at all,
The thousands that traverse the street.

" ' Then ladies, dear ladies, your pity bestow ' " ;
Just then a tall footman came round,
And asking the ladies which way they would go,
The chariot turn'd off with a bound.

" Ah ! see, little girl," then her mother replied,
" How foolish it was to complain ;
If you would have look'd on the contrary side,
Your tears would have dried up again.

" Your house, and your friends, and your victuals and bed,
'Twas God in His mercy that gave ;
You did not deserve to be cover'd and fed,
Yet all of these blessings you have.

" This poor little beggar is hungry and cold,
No father or mother has she ;
And while such an object as this you behold,
Contented indeed you should be.

" A coach, and a footman, and gaudy attire,
Give little true joy to the breast ;
To be good is the thing you should chiefly desire,
And then leave to God all the rest."

Ann Taylor.

The Spider and the Fly

"WILL you walk into my parlour?" said the spider to the fly;
"'Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy;
The way into the parlour is up a winding stair,
And I've many a curious thing to show when you are there!"
"Oh, no, no," said the little fly, "to ask me is in vain,
For who goes up your winding stair can ne'er come down again."
"I am sure you must be weary, dear, with soaring up so high;
Will you rest upon my little bed?" said the spider to the fly;
"There are pretty curtains drawn around, the sheets are fine and thin,
And if you like to rest awhile, I'll snugly tuck you in!"
"Oh, no, no," said the little fly, "for I've often heard it said,
They never, never wake again, who sleep upon your bed!"
Said the cunning spider to the fly, "Dear friend, what can I do,
To prove the warm affection I've always felt for you?
I have, within my pantry, good store of all that's nice;
I'm sure you're very welcome, will you please to take a slice?"
"Oh, no, no," said the little fly, "kind sir, that cannot be,
I've heard what's in your pantry, and I do not wish to see."
"Sweet creature," said the spider, "you're witty and you're wise;
How handsome are your gaudy wings! how brilliant are your eyes!
I have a little looking-glass upon my parlour shelf;
If you'll step in one moment, dear, you shall behold yourself."
"I thank you, gentle sir," she said, "for what you're pleased to say,

And bidding you good-morrow now, I'll call another day."
The spider turn'd him round about, and went into his den,
For well he knew the silly fly would soon come back again.
So he wove a subtle web in a little corner sly,
And set his table ready to dine upon the fly.
Then he came out to his door again, and merrily did sing,
"Come hither, hither, pretty fly, with the pearl and silver wing;
Your robes are green and purple, there's a crest upon your head;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine are dull as lead."
Alas! alas! how very soon this silly little fly,
Hearing his wily, flattering words, came slowly flitting by;
With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then near and nearer drew,
Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and green and purple hue;
Thinking only of her crested head, poor foolish thing! at last
Up jumped the cunning spider, and fiercely held her fast.
He dragged her up his winding stair, into his dismal den,
Within his little parlour,—but she ne'er came out again!

MORAL

And now, dear little children, who may this story read,
To idle, silly, flattering words, I pray you ne'er give heed:
Unto an evil counsellor, close heart, and ear, and eye,
And take a lesson from this tale of the spider and the fly.

Mary Howitt.

An Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog

GOOD people all, of every sort,
Give ear unto my song,
And if you find it wondrous short,
It cannot hold you long.

In Islington there was a man
Of whom the world might say,
That still a godly race he ran,
Whene'er he went to pray.

A kind and gentle heart he had
To comfort friends and foes ;
The naked every day he clad,
When he put on his clothes.

And in that town a dog was found,
As many dogs there be,
Both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound
And curs of low degree.

This dog and man at first were friends,
But when a pique began,
The dog, to gain some private ends,
Went mad and bit the man.

Around from all the neighbouring streets
The wondering neighbours ran,
And swore the dog had lost his wits,
To bite so good a man.

The wound it seemed both sore and sad
To every Christian eye ;
And while they swore the dog was mad,
They swore the man would die.

An Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog

But soon a wonder came to light,
That show'd the rogues they lied;
The man recovered of the bite,
The dog it was that died.

Oliver Goldsmith.

On a Favourite Cat, Drowned in a Tub of Goldfishes

'TWAS on a lofty vase's side
Where China's gayest art had dyed
The azure flowers that blow,
Demurest of the tabby kind
The pensive Selima, reclined,
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared:
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes—
She saw, and purr'd applause.

Still had she gazed, but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The Genii of the stream:
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue
Through richest purple, to the view
Betray'd a golden gleam.

The hapless Nymph with wonder saw:
A whisker first, and then a claw

On a Favourite Cat

With many an ardent wish
She stretch'd, in vain, to reach the prize—
What female heart can gold despise?
What Cat's averse to Fish?

Presumptuous maid! with looks intent
Again she stretch'd, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between—
Malignant Fate sat by and smiled—
The slippery verge her feet beguiled;
She tumbled headlong in!

Eight times emerging from the flood
She mew'd to every watery God
Some speedy aid to send:—
No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirr'd,
Nor cruel Tom nor Susan heard—
A favourite has no friend!

From hence, ye Beauties! undeceived
Know one false step is ne'er retrieved,
And be with caution bold:
Not all that tempts your wandering eyes
And heedless hearts, is lawful prize,
Nor all that glisters, gold!

Thomas Gray.

Pocahontas

WEARIED arm and broken sword
Wage in vain the desperate fight;
Round him press a countless horde,
He is but a single knight.

Pocahontas

Hark a cry of triumph shrill
  Through the wilderness resounds,
  As, with twenty bleeding wounds,
Sinks the warrior fighting still.

Now they heap the fatal pyre,
  And the torch of death they light ;
Ah ! 'tis hard to die of fire !
  Who will shield the captive knight ?
Round the stake with fiendish cry
  Wheel and dance the savage crowd,
  Cold the victim's mien and proud,
And his breast is bared to die.

Who will shield the fearless heart ?
  Who avert the murderous blade ?
From the throng, with sudden start,
  See there springs an Indian maid !
Quick she stands before the knight :
  " Loose the chain, unbind the ring ;
  I am daughter of the king,
And I claim the Indian right ! "

Dauntlessly aside she flings
  Lifted axe and thirsty knife ;
Fondly to his heart she clings,
  And her bosom guards his life !
In the wood of Powhattan,
  Still 'tis told by Indian fires,
  How a daughter of their sires
Saved the captive Englishman.

William Makepeace Thackeray.

Spring

SOUND the flute !
Now it's mute.
Birds delight
Day and night ;
Nightingale
In the dale,
Lark in sky
Merrily,
Merrily, merrily, to welcome in the year.

Little boy,
Full of joy ;
Little girl,
Sweet and small ;
Cock does crow,
So do you.
Merry voice,
Infant noise,
Merrily, merrily, to welcome in the year.

Little lamb,
Here I am ;
Come and lick
My white neck ;
Let me pull
Your soft wool ;
Let me kiss
Your soft face :
Merrily, merrily, we welcome in the year.

William Blake.

My Heart Leaps Up

MY heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky :
So was it when my life began ;
So is it now I am a man ;
So be it when I shall grow old
Or let me die !
The child is father of the man ;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

William Wordsworth.

Come Unto These Yellow Sands

COME unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands :
Court'sied when you have, and kiss'd
(The wild waves, whist),
Foot it featly here and there ;
And sweet sprites, the burden bear.
Hark, hark !
(*Burden*) Bowgh, wowgh.
The watch-dogs bark :
(*Burden*) Bowgh, wowgh.
Hark, hark ! I hear
The strain of strutting chanticlere
Cry, Cock-a-doodle-doo.

William Shakespeare.

Address to a Child during a Boisterous Winter Evening

WHAT way does the Wind come ?
What way does he go ?
He rides over the water, and over the snow,
Through wood, and through vale ; and o'er rocky height,

Address to a Child

Which the goat cannot climb, takes his sounding flight ;
He tosses about in every bare tree,
As, if you look up, you plainly may see :
But how he will come, and whither he goes,
There's never a scholar in England knows.

He will suddenly stop in a cunning nook,
And rings a sharp 'larum ; but, if you should look,
There's nothing to see but a cushion of snow
Round as a pillow, and whiter than milk,
And softer than if it were covered with silk.
Sometimes he'll hide in the cave of a rock,
Then whistle as shrill as the buzzard cock.
Yet seek him,—and what shall you find in his place?
Nothing but silence and empty space ;
Save, in a corner, a heap of dry leaves,
That he's left, for a bed, to beggars or thieves !

As soon as 'tis daylight, to-morrow, with me
You shall go to the orchard, and then you will see
That he has been there, and made a great rout,
And cracked the branches, and strewn them about :
Heaven grant that he spare but that one upright twig
That looked up at the sky so proud and big,
All last summer, as well you know,
Studded with apples, a beautiful show !

Hark ! over the roof he makes a pause,
And growls as if he would fix his claws
Right in the slates, and with a huge rattle
Drive them down, like men in a battle :
But let him range round ; he does us no harm,
We build up the fire, we're snug and warm ;
Untouched by his breath, see the candle shines bright,
And burns with a clear and steady light ;
Books have we to read,—but that half-stifled knell,
Alas ! 'tis the sound of the eight o'clock bell.

Address to a Child

Come, now we'll to bed ! and when we are there
He may work his own will, and what shall we care ?
He may knock at the door,—we'll not let him in ;
May drive at the windows,—we'll laugh at his din :
Let him seek his own home, wherever it be ;
Here's a *cozie* warm house for Edward and me.

Dorothy Wordsworth.

The Cloud

" I BRING fresh showers for thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams ;
I bear light shades for the leaves when laid
In their noon-day dreams ;
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet birds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances in the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under ;
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

" I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast ;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast,
Sublime on the towers of my shyey bowers,
Lightning, my pilot, sits ;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder—
It struggles and howls by fits.
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,

The Cloud

Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea ;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The spirit he loves remains ;
And I, all the while, bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

" The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning-star shines dead ;
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle, alit, one moment may sit,
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath
Its ardours of rest and love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depths of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

" That orbed maiden, with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn ;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer !
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

The Cloud

" I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl ;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banners unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow ;
In sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist air was laughing below.

" I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky ;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ;
I change, but I cannot die ;
For, after the rain, when, with never a stain,
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams, with their convex gleams,
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again."

Percy Bysshe Shelley.

The Bluebell

THE bluebell is the sweetest flower
That waves in summer air :
Its blossoms have the mightiest power
To soothe my spirit's care.

The Bluebell

There is a spell in purple heath
  Too wildly, sadly dear ;
The violet has a fragrant breath,
  But fragrance will not cheer.

The trees are bare, the sun is cold,
  And seldom, seldom seen ;
The heavens have lost their zone of gold
  And earth her robes of green.

And ice upon the glancing stream
  Has cast its sombre shade ;
And distant hills and valleys seem
  In frozen mist arrayed.

The bluebell cannot charm me now,
  The heath has lost its bloom,
The violets in the glen below,
  They yield no sweet perfume.

But, though I mourn the sweet bluebell,
  'Tis better far away ;
I know how fast my tears would swell
  To see it smile to-day.

For, oh ! when chill the sunbeams fall
  Adown that dreary sky,
And gild yon dank and darkened wall
  With transient brilliancy ;

How do I weep, how do I pine
  For the time of flowers to come,
And turn me from that fading shine,
  To mourn the fields of home !

Emily Brontë.

Hunting Song

WAKEN, lords and ladies gay,
On the mountain dawns the day,
All the jolly chase is here,
With hawk, and horse, and hunting-spear !
Hounds are in their couples yelling,
Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,
Merrily, merrily, mingle they,
" Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
The mist has left the mountain grey,
Springlets in the dawn are steaming,
Diamonds on the brake are gleaming :
And foresters have busy been,
To track the buck in thicket green ;
Now we come to chant our lay,
" Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
To the green-wood haste away ;
We can show you where he lies,
Fleet of foot, and tall of size ;
We can show the marks he made,
When 'gainst the oak his antlers fray'd ;
You shall see him brought to bay,
" Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Louder, louder chant the lay,
Waken, lords and ladies gay ;
Tell them youth, and mirth, and glee,
Run a course as well as we ;
Time, stern huntsman ! who can baulk,
Stanch as hound, and fleet as hawk ?
Think of this, and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay.

Sir Walter Scott.

The Wind in a Frolic

THE wind one morning sprang up from sleep,
Saying, " Now for a frolic ! now for a leap !
Now for a mad-cap galloping chase !
I'll make a commotion in every place ! "

So it swept with a bustle right through a great town,
Cracking the signs and scattering down
Shutters ; and whisking, with merciless squalls,
Old women's bonnets and gingerbread stalls.
There never was heard a much lustier shout,
As the apples and oranges trundled about ;
And the urchins that stand with their thievish eyes
For ever on watch, ran off each with a prize.

Then away to the field it went blustering and humming,
And the cattle all wonder'd whatever was coming ;
It pluck'd by the tails the grave, matronly cows,
And toss'd the colts' manes all over their brows ;
Till, offended at such an unusual salute,
They all turn'd their backs, and stood sulky and mute.

So on it went capering and playing its pranks,
Whistling with reeds on the broad river's banks,
Puffing the birds as they sat on the spray
Or the traveller grave on the king's highway.
It was not too nice to hustle the bags
Of the beggar, and flutter his dirty rags ;
'Twas so bold, that it feared not to play its joke
With the doctor's wig or the gentleman's cloak.
Through the forest it roar'd, and cried gaily, " Now,
You sturdy old oaks, I'll make you bow ! "

And it made them bow without much ado,
Or it crack'd their great branches through and through.

The Wind in a Frolic

Then it rush'd like a monster on cottage and farm,
Striking their dwellings with sudden alarm ;
And they ran out like bees in a midsummer swarm.
There were dames with their kerchiefs tied over their caps,
To see if their poultry were free from mishaps.

The turkeys they gobbled, the geese scream'd aloud,
And the hens crept to roost in a terrified crowd ;
There was rearing of ladders, and logs laying on,
Where the thatch from the roof threaten'd soon to be gone.
But the wind had swept on and had met in a lane
With a schoolboy, who panted and struggled in vain ;
For it toss'd him, and twirl'd him, then pass'd, and he stood
With his hat in a pool, and his shoes in the mud.

Then away went the wind in its holiday glee,
And now it was far on the billowy sea,
And the lordly ships felt its staggering blow,
And the little boats darted to and fro.
But lo ! it was night, and it sank to rest
On the sea-bird's rock in the gleaming west,
Laughing to think in its fearful fun,
How little of mischief it had done.

William Howitt.

The Echoing Green

THE sun does arise
And make happy the skies ;
The merry bells ring
To welcome the Spring ;
The skylark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,

The Echoing Green

Sing louder around
To the bells' cheerful sound ;
While our sports shall be seen
On the Echoing Green.

Old John with white hair,
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak
Among the old folk.
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say,
" Such, such were the joys
When we all, girls and boys,
In our youth-time were seen
On the Echoing Green."

Till the little ones, weary,
No more can be merry :
The sun does descend,
And our sports have an end.
Round the laps of their mothers,
Many sisters and brothers,
Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest,
And sport no more seen
On the darkening Green.

William Blake.

The Frost

THE Frost looked forth, one still, clear night,
And whispered, " Now I shall be out of sight ;
So through the valley and over the height,
In silence I'll take my way :

The Frost

I will not go on like that blustering train,
The wind and the snow, the hail and the rain,
Who make so much bustle and noise in vain,
But I'll be as busy as they."

Then he flew to the mountain and powdered its crest ;
He lit on the trees, and their boughs he dressed
In diamond beads—and over the breast
Of the quivering lake he spread
A coat of mail, that it need not fear
The downward point of many a spear
That hung on its margin far and near,
Where a rock could rear its head.

He went to the windows of those who slept,
And over each pane, like a fairy, crept ;
Wherever he breathed, wherever he slept,
By the light of the moon were seen
Most beautiful things—there were flowers and trees ;
There were bevies of birds and swarms of bees ;
There were cities with temples and towers, and these
All pictured in silver sheen !

But he did one thing that was hardly fair ;
He peeped in the cupboard, and finding there
That all had forgotten for him to prepare—
" Now just to set them a-thinking,
I'll bite this basket of fruit," said he,
" This costly pitcher I'll burst in three,
And the glass of water they've left for me
Shall ' *tchich !* ' to tell them I'm drinking."

Hannah Flagg Gould.

The Brook: An Idyll

I COME from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern.
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
Or babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter as I flow
To join the brimming river
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

The Brook

And here and there a foamy flake
  Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
  Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
  To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
  But I go on for ever.

Lord Tennyson.

The Last Rose of Summer

'TIS the last rose of summer
  Left blooming alone ;
All her lovely companions
  Are faded and gone ;
No flower of her kindred,
  No rose-bud is nigh,
To reflect back her blushes,
  Or give sigh for sigh.

I'll not leave thee, thou lone one !
  To pine on the stem ;
Since the lovely are sleeping,
  Go, sleep thou with them.
Thus kindly I scatter
  Thy leaves o'er the bed
Where thy mates of the garden
  Lie scentless and dead.

So soon may I follow,
  When friendships decay,
And from Love's shining circle
  The gems drop away.

The Last Rose of Summer

When true hearts lie withered,
And fond ones are flown,
O ! who would inhabit
This bleak world alone ?

Thomas Moore.

Twilight

THE twilight is sad and cloudy,
The wind blows wild and free,
And like the wings of sea-birds
Flash the white caps of the sea.

But in the fisherman's cottage
There shines a ruddier light,
And a little face at the window
Peers out into the night.

Close, close it is pressed to the window,
As if those childish eyes
Were looking into the darkness,
To see some form arise.

And a woman's waving shadow
Is passing to and fro,
Now rising to the ceiling,
Now bowing and bending low.

What tale do the roaring ocean,
And the night-wind, bleak and wild,
As they beat at the crazy casement,
Tell to that little child ?

Twilight

And why do the roaring ocean,
And the night-wind, wild and bleak,
As they beat at the heart of the mother,
Drive the colour from her cheek?

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

England

THIS royal throne of Kings, this sceptred isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise;
This fortress, built by nature for herself,
Against infection and the hand of war;
This happy breed of men, this little world;
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England.

William Shakespeare.

The Ballad of Agincourt

FAIR stood the wind for France,
When we our sails advance,
Nor now to prove our chance
Longer will tarry;
But putting to the main,
At Caux, the mouth of Seine,
With all his martial train,
Landed King Harry.

And taking many a fort,
Furnished in warlike sort,
Marched towards Agincourt
In happy hour,
Skirmishing day by day
With those that stopped his way,
Where the French gen'ral lay
With all his power :

Which, in his height of pride,
King Henry to deride,
His ransom to provide
To the king sending ;
Which he neglects the while
As from a nation vile,
Yet with an angry smile
Their fall portending.

And turning to his men,
Quoth our brave Henry then,
" Though they to one be ten,
Be not amazèd.
Yet have we well begun,
Battles so bravely won
Have ever to the sun
By fame been raisèd.

" And for myself," quoth he,
" This my full rest shall be :
England ne'er mourn for me,
Nor more esteem me ;
Victor I will remain
Or on this earth lie slain ;
Never shall she sustain
Loss to redeem me.

The Ballad of Agincourt

"Poitiers and Cressy tell,
When most their pride did swell,
Under our swords they fell;
No less our skill is
Than when our grandsire great,
Claiming the regal seat,
By many a warlike feat
Lopped the French lilies."

The Duke of York so dread
The eager vaward led;
With the main Henry sped,
Amongst his henchmen
Excester had the rear,
A braver man not there:
O Lord, how hot they were
On the false Frenchmen!

They now to fight are gone,
Armour on armour shone,
Drum now to drum did groan,
To hear was wonder;
That with the cries they make
The very earth did shake,
Trumpet to trumpet spake,
Thunder to thunder.

Well it thine age became,
O noble Erpingham,
Which did the signal aim
To our hid forces!
When from a meadow by,
Like a storm suddenly,
The English archery
Struck the French horses.

The Ballad of Agincourt

With Spanish yew so strong,
Arrows a cloth-yard long,
That like to serpents stung,
Piercing the weather;
None from his fellow starts,
But playing manly parts,
And like true English hearts
Stuck close together.

When down their bows they threw,
And forth their bilbows drew,
And on the French they flew,
Not one was tardy;
Arms were from shoulders sent,
Scalps to the teeth were rent,
And down the French peasants went;
Our men were hardy.

Thus while our noble king,
His broadsword brandishing,
Down the French host did ding
As to o'erwhelm it,
And many a deep wound lent,
His arms with blood besprent,
And many a cruel dent
Bruisèd his helmet.

Glo'ster, that duke so good,
Next of the royal blood,
For famous England stood,
With his brave brother;
Clarence, in steel so bright,
Though but a maiden knight,
Yet in that furious fight
Scarce such another!

The Ballad of Agincourt

Warwick in blood did wade,
Oxford the foe invade,
And cruel slaughter made,
Still as they ran up ;
Suffolk his axe did ply,
Beaumont and Willoughby
Bare them right doughtily,
Ferres and Fanhope.

Upon Saint Crispin's Day
Fought was this noble fray,
Which fame did not delay,
To England to carry.
O, when shall Englishmen
With such acts fill a pen,
Or England breed again
Such a King Harry ?

Michael Drayton.

Rule Britannia

WHEN Britain first at Heaven's command
Arose from out the azure main,
This was the charter of her land,
And guardian angels sung the strain :
Rule Britannia ! Britannia rules the waves !
Britons never shall be slaves.

The nations not so blest as thee
Must in their turn to tyrants fall,
Whilst thou shalt flourish great and free,
The dread and envy of them all.

Rule Britannia

Still more majestic shalt thou rise,
More dreadful from each foreign stroke;
As the loud blast that tears the skies
Serves but to root thy native oak.

Thee haughty tyrants ne'er shall tame;
All their attempts to bend thee down
Will but arouse thy generous flame,
And work their woe and thy renown.

To thee belongs the rural reign;
Thy cities shall with commerce shine;
All thine shall be the subject main,
And every shore it circles thine!

The Muses, still with Freedom found,
Shall to thy happy coast repair;
Blest Isle, with matchless beauty crown'd,
And manly hearts to guard the fair:—
Rule Britannia! Britannia rules the waves!
Britons never shall be slaves!

James Thomson.

The Charge of the Light Brigade

HALF a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death,
Rode the six hundred.
"Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!" he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

The Charge of the Light Brigade

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
Was there a man dismayed?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd:
Their's not to make reply,
Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air,
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd:
Plunged in the battery-smoke,
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd;

The Charge of the Light Brigade

Storm'd at with shot and shell
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
    Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
    All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
    Noble six hundred!

Lord Tennyson.

Incident of the French Camp

YOU know, we French stormed Ratisbon:
    A mile or so away,
On a little mound, Napoleon
  Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
  Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
  Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused "My plans
  That soar, to earth may fall,
Let once my army-leader Lannes
  Waver at yonder wall,"—
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
  A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
  Until he reached the mound.

Incident of the French Camp

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy :
You hardly could suspect—
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
Scarce any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
Was all but shot in two.

" Well," cried he, " Emperor, by God's grace
We've got you Ratisbon !
The Marshal's in the market-place,
And you'll be there anon
To see your flag-bird flap his vans
Where I, to heart's desire,
Perched him ! " The chief's eye flashed ; his plans
Soared up again like fire.

The chief's eye flashed ; but presently
Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother-eagle's eye
When her bruised eaglet breathes ;
" You're wounded ! " " Nay," the soldier's pride
Touched to the quick, he said :
" I'm killed, Sire ! " And his chief beside
Smiling the boy fell dead.

Robert Browning.

The Battle of Blenheim

IT was a summer evening,
Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
Was sitting in the sun ;
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

The Battle of Blenheim

She saw her brother Peterkin
  Roll something large and round
Which he beside the rivulet
  In playing there had found ;
He came to ask what he had found
That was so large and smooth and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy
  Who stood expectant by ;
And then the old man shook his head,
  And with a natural sigh
" 'Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,
" Who fell in the great victory."

" I find them in the garden,
  For there's many here about ;
And often when I go to plough
  The ploughshare turns them out.
For many thousand men," said he,
" Were slain in that great victory."

" Now tell us what 'twas all about,"
  Young Peterkin he cries ;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
  With wonder-waiting eyes ;
" Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for."

" It was the English," Kaspar cried,
  " Who put the French to rout ;
But what they fought each other for
  I could not well make out.
But everybody said," quoth he,
" That 'twas a famous victory.

The Battle of Blenheim

" My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by ;
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly :
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

" With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide,
And many a childing mother then
And newborn baby died :
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

" They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won ;
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun :
But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory.

" Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won
And our good Prince Eugene ; "
" Why 'twas a very wicked thing ! "
Said little Wilhelmine ;
" Nay . . nay . . my little girl," quoth he,
" It was a famous victory.

" And every body praised the Duke
Who this great fight did win."
" But what good came of it at last ? "
Quoth little Peterkin :—
" Why that I cannot tell," said he,
" But 'twas a famous victory."

Robert Southey.

The War-Song of Dinas Vawr

THE mountain sheep are sweeter,
But the valley sheep are fatter ;
We therefore deemed it meeter
To carry off the latter.
We made an expedition ;
We met a host, and quelled it ;
We forced a strong position,
And killed the men who held it.

On Dyfed's richest valley,
Where herds of kine were browsing,
We made a mighty sally,
To furnish our carousing,
Fierce warriors rushed to meet us ;
We met them, and o'erthrew them :
They struggled hard to beat us ;
But we conquered them, and slew them.

As we drove our prize at leisure,
The king marched forth to catch us :
His rage surpassed all measure,
But his people could not match us.
He fled to his hall-pillars ;
And, ere our force we led off,
Some sacked his house and cellars,
While others cut his head off.

We there, in strife bewild'ring,
Spilt blood enough to swim in :
We orphaned many children,
And widowed many women.
The eagles and the ravens
We glutted with our foemen ;
The heroes and the cravens,
The spearmen and the bowmen.

The War-Song of Dinas Vawr

We brought away from battle,
And much their land bemoaned them,
Two thousand head of cattle,
And the head of him who owned them :
Ednyfed, king of Dyfed,
His head was borne before us ;
His wine and beasts supplied our feasts,
And his overthrow, our chorus.

Thomas Love Peacock.

How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he ;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three ;
" Good speed ! " cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew,
" Speed ! " echoed the wall to us galloping through ;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other ; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place ;
I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting ; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew, and twilight dawned clear ;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see ;
At Duffield, 'twas morning as plain as could be ;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half chime,
So Joris broke silence with " Yet there is time ! "

How They Brought the Good News

At Aerschot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare through the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray.

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence—ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick, heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay spur!
Your Ross galloped bravely, the fault's not in her.
We'll remember at Aix"—for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw her stretched neck and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

"How they'll greet us!" and all in a moment his roan
Rolled neck and crop over; lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-socket's rim.

How They Brought the Good News

Then I cast loose my buff-coat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer ;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, good
or bad,
Till at length into Aix, Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is, friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground,
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news from
Ghent.

Robert Browning.

Battle of the Baltic

OF Nelson and the North
Sing the glorious day's renown,
When to battle fierce came forth
All the might of Denmark's crown,
And her arms along the deep proudly shone ;
By each gun the lighted brand
In a bold determined hand,
And the Prince of all the land
Led them on.

Like leviathans afloat
Lay their bulwarks on the brine ;
While the sign of battle flew
On the lofty British line :

Battle of the Baltic

It was ten of April morn by the chime :
As they drifted on their path
There was silence deep as death ;
And the boldest held his breath
For a time.

But the might of England flush'd
To anticipate the scene ;
And her van the fleeter rush'd
O'er the deadly space between.
" Hearts of oak ! " our captains cried, when each gun
From its adamantine lips
Spread a death-shade round the ships,
Like the hurricane eclipse
Of the sun.

Again ! again ! again !
And the havoc did not slack,
Till a feeble cheer the Dane
To our cheering sent us back ;—
Their shots along the deep slowly boom :—
Then ceased—and all is wail,
As they strike the shatter'd sail ;
Or in conflagration pale
Light the gloom.

Out spoke the victor then
As he hail'd them o'er the wave,
" Ye are brothers ! ye are men !
And we conquer but to save :—
So peace instead of death let us bring :
But yield, proud foe, thy fleet
With the crews, at England's feet,
And make submission meet
To our King."

Battle of the Baltic

Then Denmark blest our chief
That he gave her wounds repose ;
And the sounds of joy and grief
From her people wildly rose,
As death withdrew his shades from the day :
While the sun look'd smiling bright
O'er a wide and woeful sight,
Where the fires of funeral light
Died away.

Now joy, old England, raise !
For the tidings of thy might,
By the festal cities' blaze,
Whilst the wine cup shines in light
And yet amidst that joy and uproar,
Let us think of them that sleep
Full many a fathom deep
By thy wild and stormy steep,
Elsinore !

Brave hearts ! to Britain's pride
Once so faithful and so true,
On the deck of fame that died
With the gallant good Riou :
Soft sigh the winds of heaven o'er their grave !
While the billow mournful rolls
And the mermaid's song condoles
Singing glory to the souls
Of the brave !

Thomas Campbell.

The Burial of Sir John Moore

NOT a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the ramparts we hurried ;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot,
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

The Burial of Sir John Moore

We buried him darkly, at dead of night,
The sods with our bayonets turning,
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Nor in sheet nor in shroud we wound him,
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest,
With his martial cloak around him!

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow;
But we steadfastly gazed on the face of the dead,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought, as we hollow'd his narrow bed,
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
How the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,
And we far away on the billow!

Lightly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone,
And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him;
But little he'll reck, if they let him sleep on
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our heavy task was done,
When the clock struck the hour for retiring;
And we heard the distant and random gun
That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone,
But we left him alone with his glory.

Charles Wolfe.

The Bluebell of Scotland

OH where! and oh where! is your Highland laddie gone?
He's gone to fight the French for King George upon the throne;
And it's oh! in my heart how I wish him safe at home.

Oh where! and oh where! does your Highland laddie dwell?
He dwells in merry Scotland at the sign of the Bluebell;
And it's oh! in my heart that I love my laddie well.

What clothes, in what clothes is your Highland laddie clad?
His bonnet's of the Saxon green, his waistcoat's of the plaid;
And it's oh! in my heart that I love my Highland lad.

Suppose, oh suppose, that your Highland lad should die?
The bagpipes shall play over him, I'll lay me down and cry;
And it's oh! in my heart that I wish he may not die!

Anon.

The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk

I AM monarch of all I survey;
My right there is none to dispute;
From the centre all round to the sea
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
O Solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place.

The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk

I am out of humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone,
Never hear the sweet music of speech ;
I start at the sound of my own.
The beasts that roam over the plain
My form with indifference see ;
They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, Friendship, and Love
Divinely bestow'd upon man,
O had I the wings of a dove
How soon would I taste you again !
My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth,
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheer'd by the sallies of youth.

Ye winds that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more :
My friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me ?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind !
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift-wingèd arrows of light.
When I think of my own native land
In a moment I seem to be there ;
But alas ! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk

But the seafowl is gone to her nest,
The beast is laid down in his lair ;
Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.
There's mercy in every place,
And mercy, encouraging thought !
Gives even affliction a grace
And reconciles man to his lot.

William Cowper.

Loss of the Royal George

TOLL for the Brave !
The brave that are no more !
All sunk beneath the wave
Fast by their native shore !

Eight hundred of the brave
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel
And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds
And she was overset ;
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave !
Brave Kempenfelt is gone ;
His last sea-fight is fought,
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle ;
No tempest gave the shock ;
She sprang no fatal leak,
She ran upon no rock.

Loss of the Royal George

His sword was in its sheath,
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up
Once dreaded by our foes !
And mingle with our cup
The tear that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
And she may float again
Full charged with England's thunder,
And plough the distant main :

But Kempenfelt is gone,
His victories are o'er ;
And he and his eight hundred
Shall plough the wave no more.

William Cowper.

Ye Mariners of England

YE Mariners of England
That guard our native seas !
Whose flag has braved, a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze !
Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe :
And sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow ;
While the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy winds do blow.

The Minstrel Boy

THE minstrel boy to the war has gone,
In the ranks of death you'll find him ;
His father's sword he has girded on,
And his wild harp slung behind him.
" Land of song ! " said the warrior-bard,
" Though all the world betrays thee,
One sword at least thy rights shall guard,
One faithful harp shall praise thee ! "

The minstrel fell !—but the foeman's chain
Could not bring his proud soul under ;
The harp he loved ne'er spoke again,
For he tore its chords asunder ;
And said, " No chains shall sully thee,
Thou soul of love and bravery !
Thy songs were made for the brave and free,
They shall never sound in slavery ! "

Thomas Moore.

Mercy

THE quality of mercy is not strain'd ;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath : it is twice bless'd ;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes :
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes
The thronèd monarch better than his crown ;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings ;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway,
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself ;

Mercy

And earthly power doth then show likest God's,
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice none of us
Should see salvation : we do pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy.

William Shakespeare.

Good King Wenceslas

GOOD King Wenceslas looked out
On the Feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about,
Deep, and crisp, and even.
Brightly shone the moon that night,
Though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight,
Gath'ring winter fuel.

"Hither, page, and stand by me,
If thou know'st it, telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?"
"Sire, he lives a good league hence,
Underneath the mountain ;
Right against the forest fence,
By Saint Agnes' fountain."

"Bring me flesh, and bring me wine,
Bring me pine-logs hither :
Thou and I will see him dine,
When we bear them thither."

Good King Wenceslas

Page and monarch, forth they went,
  Forth they went together;
Through the rude wind's wild lament
  And the bitter weather.

"Sire, the night is darker now,
  And the wind blows stronger;
Fails my heart, I know not how,
  I can go no longer."
"Mark my footsteps, good my page;
  Tread thou in them boldly:
Thou shalt find the winter rage
  Freeze thy blood less coldly."

In his master's steps he trod,
  Where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod
  Which the saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men be sure,
  Wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor,
  Shall yourselves find blessing.

Old Carol.

"*Sweet and Low*"

SWEET and low, sweet and low,
  Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
  Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
  Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

"Sweet and Low"

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest ;
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast ;
Father will come to thee soon :
Father will come to his babe in the nest—
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon !
Sleep, my little one ; sleep, my pretty one ; sleep.

Lord Tennyson.

Willie Winkie

WEE Willie Winkie
Rins through the town,
Up stairs and down stairs
In his nicht-gown ;
Tirling at the window,
Crying at the lock,
" Are the weans in their bed,
For it's now ten o'clock ? "

Hey, Willie Winkie,
Are ye coming ben ?
The cat's singing grey thrums,
To the sleeping hen ;
The dog's spelder'd on the floor,
And doesna' gie a cheep,
But here's a waukrife laddie
That winna' fa' asleep.

Onything but sleep, you rogue !
Glow'ring like the moon,
Rattling in an airn jug
Wi' an airn spoon ;

Willie Winkie

Rumblin', tumblin', round about,
  Crawing like a cock,
Skirlin' like a kenna-what,
  Wauk'nin' sleeping folk.

Hey, Willie Winkie—
  The wean's in a creel !
Wamblin's aff a body's knee
  Like a very eel,
Ruggin' at the cat's lug,
  Rav'llin' a' her thrums—
Hey, Willie Winkie—
  See, there he comes !

Wearied is the mither
  That has a stoorie wean,
A wee stumpie stousie,
  That canna rin his lane.
That has a battle aye wi' sleep,
  Before he'll close an e'e—
But a kiss frae aff his rosy lips,
  Gies strength anew to me.

William Miller.

Lullaby of an Infant Chief

OH, hush thee, my baby ! thy sire was a knight,
  Thy mother a lady, both lovely and bright ;
The woods and the glens, from the towers which we see,
They all are belonging, dear baby, to thee.

Oh, fear not the bugle, though loudly it blows !
It calls but the warders that guard thy repose ;
Their bows would be bended, their blades would be red,
Ere the step of a foeman draws near to thy bed.

Lullaby of an Infant Chief

Oh, hush thee, my baby ! the time will soon come
When thy sleep shall be broken by trumpet and drum ;
Then hush thee, my darling ! take rest while you may ;
For strife comes with manhood, and waking with day.

Walter Scott.

The Child with Story Goes to Bed

I PRYTHEE, Nurse, come smooth my hair,
And prythee, Nurse, unloose my shoe,
And trimly turn my silken sheet
Upon my quilt of gentle blue.

My pillow sweet of lavender
Smooth with an amiable hand,
And may the dark pass peacefully by
As in the hour-glass drops the sand.

Prepare my cornered manchet sweet,
And in my little crystal cup
Pour out the blithe and flowing mead
That forthwith I may sup.

Withdraw my curtains from the night,
And let the crispèd crescent shine
Upon my eyelids while I sleep,
And soothe me with her beams benign.

Dark looms the forest far away ;
O, listen ! through its empty dales
Rings from the solemn echoing boughs
The music of its nightingales.

The Child with Story Goes to Bed

Now quench my silver lamp, prythee,
And bid the harpers harp that tune
Fairies which haunt the meadowlands
Sing clearly to the stars of June.

And bid them play, though I in dreams
No longer heed their pining strains,
For I would not to silence wake
When slumber o'er my senses wanes.

You Angels bright who me defend,
Enshadow me with curvèd wing,
And keep me in the darksome night
Till dawn another day do bring.

Walter de la Mare.

Evening Song

LITTLE birds sleep sweetly
In their soft round nests,
Crouching in the cover
Of their mothers' breasts.

Little lambs lie quiet,
All the summer night
With their old ewe mothers,
Warm, and soft, and white.

But more sweet and quiet
Lie our little heads,
With our own dear mothers
Sitting by our beds ;

And their soft sweet voices
Sing our hush-a-bies,
While the moon grows darker
As we shut our eyes.

Evening Song

And we play at evening
  Round our father's knees ;
Birds are not so merry,
  Singing on the trees.

Lambs are not so happy,
  'Mid the meadow flowers ;
They have play and pleasure,
  But not love like ours.

But the heart that's loving,
  Works of love will do ;
Those we dearly cherish,
  We must honour too.

To our father's teaching
  Listen day by day,
And our mother's bidding
  Cheerfully obey.

For when in His childhood
  Our dear Lord was here,
He too was obedient
  To His Mother dear.

And His little children
  Must be good as He,
Gentle and submissive,
  As He used to be.

Cecil Frances Alexander.

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